



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Dalrymple Proclaims Suicide Prevention Month in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor Jack Dalrymple has proclaimed September as Suicide Prevention Month in North Dakota.

According to the North Dakota Department of Health, North Dakota ranks fourteenth in the nation for its rate of suicide deaths. Suicide was the eighth leading cause of death in 2012 among North Dakotans. In 2012, 107 North Dakotans died as a result of suicide.

Suicide affects everyone, but some groups are at higher risk than others. Suicide affects people of all ages and races in North Dakota, but suicide rates have typically been higher in the Native American population and for men. Men are four times more likely than women to die from suicide, but women are three times more likely to attempt suicide.

“Being aware of the warning signs of suicide and being willing to talk about suicide is so important,” said Micki Savelkoul, Suicide Prevention Program director for the Department of Health. “Suicide is a very complex and multi-faceted condition. There is rarely one cause for suicide.”

Savelkoul says that when you see behavioral changes in people, don’t be afraid to ask them if they are suicidal, even if the answer is no. People are much more likely to talk to people they trust when first disclosing suicidal thoughts and you won’t put a suicidal thought into someone’s head if they weren’t thinking about suicide previously. There are many evidence based or best practice community trainings such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) or Sources of Strength that provide community members education on what warning signs to watch for, how to talk about suicide and how to get someone help.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

Risk factors for suicide include, but are not limited to:

- Previous suicide attempt(s).
- History of depression or other mental illness.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Family history of suicide or violence.
- Physical illness.
- Feeling alone.

The warning signs of suicide can include changes in a person's mood, diet or sleeping pattern; increased alcohol or drug use; withdrawal from friends, family and society; rage or uncontrolled anger; and reckless behavior.

Some of the ways to be helpful to someone who is threatening suicide include:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be nonjudgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove lethal means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from someone specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. Help is available by calling **1.800.273.TALK (8255)** a free and confidential 24/7 suicide prevention lifeline.

The North Dakota Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention raises funds for scientific research, education and treatment programs, as well as programs to support those who have lost loved ones to suicide. This year, six "Out of the Darkness" Community Walks are scheduled in North Dakota to raise funds for suicide prevention and awareness. The events are planned for the following: Bismarck (Sept. 7), Minot (Sept. 7), Dickinson (Sept. 14), Williston (Sept. 15), Fargo (Sept. 22), Valley City (Sept. 29). For information about locations and starting times, contact Mary Weiler at afspnd@gmail.com or www.afsp.org.

The North Dakota Department of Health, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, Mental Health America of North Dakota, and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention are partnering with local organizations, tribal agencies, the Veterans Administration, North Dakota National Guard, and community partners to address suicide prevention through the North Dakota Suicide Prevention Coalition.

For information about developing local prevention programs or for more information about suicide prevention or information about the Suicide Prevention Coalition, contact Micki Savelkoul, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4580.

Please note: Proclamation follows

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PROCLAMATION
SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH
SEPTEMBER 2013

WHEREAS, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and the third leading cause of death among people ages 15 to 24; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, one person dies by suicide every 15 minutes; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in North Dakota and is a concern across all age and cultural demographics; and

WHEREAS, agencies and individuals across North Dakota are working to prevent suicide; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans are encouraged to learn the warning signs of suicide and to get appropriate help for themselves and their family members who are at risk.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim September 2013, **SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH** in the state of North Dakota.

Jack Dalrymple
Governor

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